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RAINARD KNUTSEN

MR. KNUTSEN: Good evening. My name is Rainard Knutsen. I'm a resident of Las Vegas.

1 A friend of mine this morning gave testimony and said that the Department of Energy should be ashamed for what they're doing, and I share those sentiments. I think that they should be ashamed for the lies that they are telling us. But I am also outraged that I have to be here to testify on a Depart -- on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement that is -- as far as I'm concerned is thirteen pounds worth of lies and bad science.

And some people think that I'm being a little bit dramatic by dressing up like this and carrying around a gas mask, but these are dramatic times that we are living in, and what the Department of Energy is proposing is very dramatic; not only for us, but for countless future generations, and so if you'll permit me to be a little bit dramatic.

The history of Department of Energy shows that it is biased in favor of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy. The history of the past fifty years shows us that -- that this nuclear weapons, nuclear energy has contaminated vast areas, not only in the United States, but of the world. The background radiation level has continued to rise. Any way that you look at it, the past fifty years has had a devastating impact on the earth and will continue to impact it for the next 250,000 years, at least.

2 So getting to the DEIS, on page 4 of the DEIS summary, it states that the DOE is responsible for implementing a permanent solution for the management of spent fuel and high-level nuclear waste. Yucca Mountain is not a permanent solution since it does not even take care of even close to all the nuclear waste that's produced right now and is going to be produced in the next thirty years. Yucca Mountain is supposed to only be designed for 70,000 metric tons and we're going to have much, much more nuclear waste than that, so where are they going to put it? Of course it's all going to end up coming to Yucca Mountain and the DEIS does not cover that -- that issue.

3 And Yucca Mountain only adds to the problem of the nuclear waste because it will give the nuclear industry the political and the physical room to create even more nuclear waste. We create six tons of nuclear waste everyday in this country. Six tons. The DOE is responsible for a permanent solution, then you are also responsible for stopping the production of this nuclear waste. We do not need nuclear power in this country. It produces twenty percent of our electricity. We have the technology to create energy efficient products and energy efficient homes. We do not need this twenty percent. We do not need the fossil fuels that are being -- we do not need the coal production. Every house in Las Vegas should have a solar panel on its roof. Every house should be producing its own energy.

4 Spending lots of money on a hole in the ground creates political pressure to open the repository. They say that they're studying Yucca Mountain by digging a hole, but because they're doing that, they are creating that political pressure to full -- to fill that hole with the nuclear waste that's currently generated. This nuclear waste approach is out of sight, out of mind, and that is not going to work.

5 This DEIS attempts to do a risk assessment of Yucca Mountain for the next 10,000 years, but the nuclear waste is going to be deadly for much longer than 10,000 years. Yet in February of this year -- of 1999, I'm sorry, of last year -- a peer review panel published a report entitled Total System Performance Assessment. This report states: "The panel finds that at the present time an assessment of the future probable behavior of the proposed repository may be beyond the analytical capabilities of any scientific and engineering team." They cannot predict the future. They do not have the technology to tell us with accuracy what is going to be happening in the future. But they are lying to us by saying that they do -- their calculations prove that there is no danger.

6 Under this five-minute period that I have to comment, which I know I'm closely reaching the end, I do not  
 7 have the time to -- to describe the thousands of ways that the DEIS is fundamentally flawed and why it  
 needs to be sent to the recycling center and begun again. But in my written statement which I will  
 present, I will attempt to show why the DEIS fails to adequately address the cumulative impacts of the  
 entire nuclear chain for mining nuclear weapons and nuclear waste production, which I believe that this  
 DEIS should show; not just Yucca Mountain, but it should show the -- the cumulative impacts of the  
 entire nuclear chain.

8 This DEIS fails to adequately address the socioeconomic impact of Southern Nevada, the fastest growing  
 region in the country. There DEIS fails to adequately address environment at justice issues, and I believe  
 that the Department of Energy is complicit in nuclear racism and colonialism of the worst kind. Yucca  
 Mountain is considered a sacred site by the Western Shoshone and over 10,000 culture sites have been  
 listed on Yucca Mountain showing that the Western Shoshone and other indigenous people have used this  
 area for hunting, for food gathering, for ceremonies, for burying their people for thousands of years.

MR. LAWSON: Thirty seconds.

9 MR. KNUTSEN: Planned destruction and desecration of Yucca Mountain is part of the continuing  
 genocide against the Western Shoshone people and other indigenous peoples of this country. This DEIS  
 fails to adequately address the seismic and hydro -- hydrology issues of Yucca Mountain. Five years ago,  
 the DOE was saying that there was no water flow through the mountain and there was no sustained  
 movement in the ground, but now it's been proven that there is a lot of water migration through the  
 mountain and that the mountain is indeed moving, as the Western Shoshone have claimed all along.

10 The DEIS fails to adequately address national transportation risks and in reality the true facts are hidden,  
 and in the past, the Department of Energy has produced reports that said -- this was like in 1987, so the  
 transportation statistics have changed enormously since then. But in 1987, the Department of Energy said  
 that there would be at least seventy to 310 accidents along the way from transporting nuclear waste, and  
 that the worst case scenario, one accident could contaminate forty-two square miles. Imagine what would  
 happen if that accident happened in Las Vegas or any other urban center. They're saying that would take  
 at least 19.4 billion dollars to clean up an accident like this in an urban area. Who's going to pay for that?

MR. LAWSON: Thirty seconds.

11 MR. KNUTSEN: And -- and that report doesn't even consider the -- the consequences to the  
 environment. It only talks about economic impact. The US Government has to take a step back and take  
 a deep breath and initiate a much broader effort to deal with our nuclear waste problem. All of the major  
 states, cities, counties and reservations that are impacted have to be included in this process, which they  
 are not being done right now, for it to have any meaning at all. But the first step in all of this is to phase  
 out nuclear waste production and that is your challenge, all of our challenges, as well.

12 And the last thing I want to say is not a threat, but a promise, that if these trucks start to come towards  
 Nevada filled with high-level nuclear waste, there are going to be people out there -- not only in Nevada,  
 but all around the country who are going to be stopping those nuclear waste trucks from entering their  
 communities, and that's another thing that's not covered by this DEIS at all. So thank you very much.